Roland digital RECORDING Connection
A Roland Users Group

# TRACK NOTES

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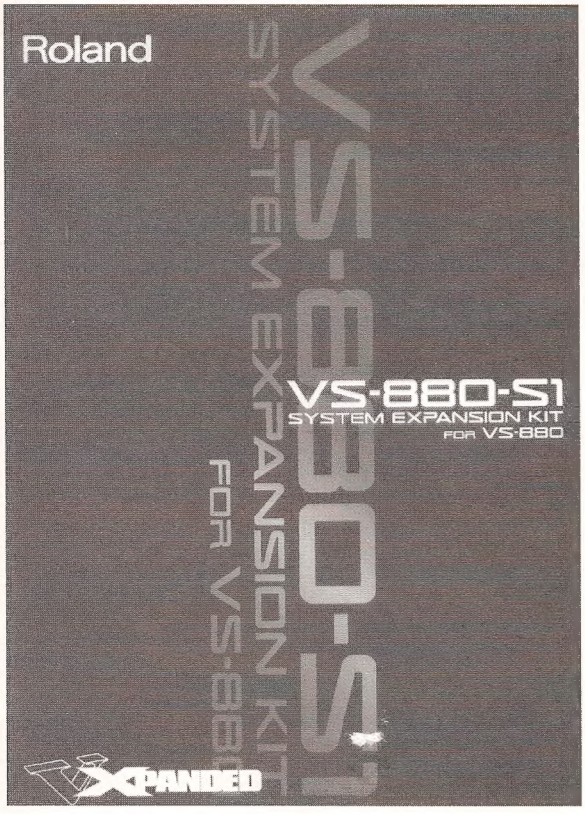
**Welcome to the first issue of *Track Notes*. Roland will be publishing this newsletter three times a year to bring you interesting facts, basic operational tips, and advanced techniques for getting the most out of your VS-880. We'll also be bringing you stories on noted '880 users, from instrumental composers to alternative rock bands. In short, *Track Notes* aims to give you more ideas on how to use your VS-880 as a tool to enhance your creativity—whether you're doing demo songs, albums, commercials or post production work.**




# VS-880-S1 "V-XPANDED" SOFTWARE UPGRADE!

In case you haven't heard, Roland is offering a system upgrade for your VS-880. We sincerely believe that this upgrade is one of the best values ever offered by a musical instrument manufacturer, so if you haven't already purchased this software (which lists for $125.00), run to your nearest VS-880 dealer and get it NOW!

**Here's what the VS-880-S1 upgrade adds to your VS-880:**

- Onboard Dynamic and Snapshot Mix Automation
- 10 New Effects Algorithms (which use the VS8F-1 Card), including:

**Microphone Simulator:** this incredible COSM processor models the rich sonic characteristics of some very expensive high-end mics using the affordable new Roland DR-20 or Shure SM-57/58 dynamic microphones as the source. You'll have to hear this to believe it!

**New Reverb Processor** with gating and ducking modes now in both processors.

**VT-1 Voice Transformer** which can convincingly alter your vocal gender or produce some funky robot-like effects, all with external MIDI pitch control!

**4-Band Stereo, Dual Mono or 8-Band Serial Parametric EQ**

**10-Band Stereo or Dual-Mono Graphic EQ**

**19-Band Vocoder**

**Lo-Fi Sound Processor**

- Lots of Mixer Enhancements, including:

2 Stereo Effects Inserts in the Mix Output
Easy Recording with Effects in Input>Track Mode

- Other new features for:

Tempo Mapping
Track FX Insert Routing
Track Level Control
MIDI Editing and Changing of FX

plus much, much more...

As you can see, the VS-880-S1 upgrade adds incredible power to your VS-880! Plus, owning this software will also be your key to using some of the Third Party offerings discussed on page 2.

# Getting the FAX

Have a question about some feature or function of the VS-880? Want to see a list of VS-880-compatible drives? Interested in a step-by-step tutorial on the most commonly used mixing and recording functions?

It's very likely that the answers to all your questions and more can be found on the Roland FaxBack system, which allows you to have helpful documents faxed directly to your home. To access FaxBack, dial 213/685-5141 x 271. Then just select the documents or directory of documents you want to receive and enter your fax number. (Be sure to check out the new VS-880 Supplemental Notes, document #21023 warning: it's 29 pages long).

# Internet Connections

Have you checked out Roland's Web Site yet? It's one of the best out there, and has even been nominated for a site development award by New Media Magazine. So do yourself a favor and visit www.rolandus.com.

You can also get VS-880 info on AOL at KEYWORD ROLAND and on CompuServe at GO ROLAND.

There's even is an online newsletter dedicated to the VS-880. It includes lots of comments from VS-880 owners and questions from people thinking about joining the digital recording revolution with the VS-880. If you're interested in joining the fray, send an e-mail to majordomo@lists.teleport.com with the message "subscribe VS-880-users-l" (that's a lower-case "l" at the end). You will then automatically receive messages as they are posted to this newsgroup and you can also participate by posting your own techniques for using the '880.

# Welcome Third Parties

It seems like the VS-880 is gaining new supporters every day, including some of the world's finest music software developers. Want to see the control interface for the VS-880 on your computer? Check out EMagic's® web page at http://www.emagicusa.com for a complete MIDI template of the VS-880 mixer settings. If you are a Performer user, call Mark of the Unicorn® for their latest upgrade, version 5.5, which includes a complete user interface for the controls of the VS-880. And contact Cakewalk® regarding the VS-880 mixer template in their latest software release.

AirWorks® has just announced that they will provide a software application for the VS-880 including attributes of breakthrough S/Link® and AutoConform® technologies. This custom application will facilitate the operation of the '880 with non-linear video editors such as Avid Media Composer® and will do file conversions from the VS-880 to most other file formats. All this for a suggested retail price of $199. Very cool for '880 owners doing post production!

**Stay tuned for more announcements regarding "third party" support for the VS-880.**

# Do the Whole CD!

With the VS-880, you can start with just a microphone, a couple of instruments and some great ideas and end up with world-class digital masters of your songs. That's right, by interfacing the VS-880 with a CD recorder in your home or project studio, you can produce a CD of your work that's ready for duplication!

Connect a CD recorder like the Pioneer PDR-05 CD Recorder to the VS-880 through the '880's Digital ports. Then record your material onto the CD, including track numbers. The resulting songs will play back in any CD player, and the PDR-05 is a multi-session recorder, meaning you can record a few songs, play them back, and record more until you've finished the entire CD.

The combination of the VS-880 and the Pioneer CD Recorder is a great way to have total control over your final product, to have CDs to distribute your material on, and to save lots of money in the process!

The PDR-05 CD Recorder lists for around $1695 and Pioneer has just released the PDR-04, which lists for only $1185. Call Pioneer for more info at 1-800-PIONEER.

# Using the VS-880 LIVE!

**Jeffry Hamilton Steele from Gloucester, MA, writes...**

***"I currently use my VS-880 in my solo guitar concerts to render guitar duets and play back synthesizer accompaniments, employing the onboard effects for both live and pre-recorded instruments. I pared down my sound system I'd been schlepping to my solo gigs (mixer, compressor, power amp, floor effects unit, speakers on stands) to one amp on top of which the VS-880 is enthroned. I find that I can give much better attention to my playing when I've spent 10 minutes setting up (as opposed to an hour or more), not to mention the visual peace that comes from not having cables running every which way."***

Jeffry uses a custom classical guitar built by Frank Hasselbacher (sounds expensive) with an L.R. Baggs pick-up, and also uses a microphone for added warmth. (We suggest he try using a Roland DR-20 microphone through the U87 mic model for a really clear and warm sound.) He uses the VS-880 to mix these inputs along with any pre-recorded tracks for a particular piece. The VS-880 is also used to add EQ, reverb, and delay to the live and recorded tracks as needed.

The VS-880's setup is actually very sophisticated. First, Jeffry selects MAB as the Master Output mode. He then uses Channel Link Mode for his faders and, by returning effects to either AUX or MIX, he can have realtime fader control over the effects balances—pretty smart routing. He also uses SCENES to store different accompaniments for different compositions. He suggests that it is best to use SCENES in the KEEPFader mode, so that if there are any specific adjustments to levels for that performance, they don't change with each new scene.

In addition, Jeffry even uses LOOP Record to record parts played live to improvise over. He uses the metronome (on REC Only) and has set up the loop to accommodate the tempo of the piece he is going to improvise in. His foot pedal starts the recording process whenever he wants to punch in a new part to play over; this allows him great flexibility in changing parts during improvisation.

**Jeffry Steele lives in Gloucester, MA and performs his program of classics and originals, *Guitarra Iluminada*, around New England.**

**Thanks, Jeffry.**

# in the SPOTLIGHT: Maggie Ryder

**BIO**

Maggie was born in England, but is currently working in NY as a songwriter for a music publishing company.

**ABBREVIATED MUSIC RESUMÉ**

1978 - Successful album on Polydor Records released in the UK and Germany. "Several unsuccessful solo projects ensued."

Has sang with: Marvin Gaye, Eurythmics, Go West, Brian May (Queen), Tears for Fears, Eric Clapton.

Has written songs for: Anita Baker, Chaka Khan, Randy Crawford, Patty Austin, Maysa Leak (Incognito), Jonathan Butler and others.

Hit success in Australia and Europe in 1986-87 with: "You're the Voice," as sung by John Fanham.

Some of her favorite things: sunny days, salmon, sushi, sailing, skiing, Steely Dan, Sheryl Crow, Stevie Wonder and other things beginning with 'S'.

Some more favorites not beginning with 'S': Prince, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Brenda Russell, Bonnie Raitt, Joni Mitchell, Pat Metheny, Quincy Jones, Miles Davis.

| | TRACK 1 | TRACK 2 | TRACK 3 | TRACK 4 | TRACK 5 | TRACK 6 | TRACK 7 | TRACK 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V1 | percussion bounce L⟷R | | guide vocal | wood block | shaker | lo drum | cymbal | triangle |
| V2 | | | lead vocal comp 2 | guitar 1 | shaker 2 | lo drum 2 | cymbal 2 | |
| V3 | | | L vox take 2 | guitar 2 | shaker comp 2 | lo drum 3 | bounced background vocals L⟷R | |
| V4 | | | L vox take 3 | guitar 3 | solo guitar 1 | lo drum 4 | | |
| V5 | | | L vox take 4 | guitar 4 | solo guitar 2 | lo drum 5 | | |
| V6 | | | L vox take 5 | guitar 5 | solo guitar 3 | L vox take 6 2 | | |
| V7 | | | L vox comp 1 | guitar comp | solo guitar 4 | overlap background vocals 2 | | |
| V8 | background vocals 1 | background vocals 2 | background vocals 3 | background vocals 4 | solo guitar comp | overlap background vocals 1 | | |

**VS-880 Track Sheet for the song "CORAZON".**

stage 1 stage 2 stage 3 stage 4 stage 5

Maggie uses her VS-880 with a MIDI sequencer. She often records in several stages as demonstrated by her track sheet for "Corazon".

In the first stage, while monitoring the MIDI tracks, a guide vocal and several live percussion parts were recorded, including several different percussion takes on different virtual tracks. Comps were made for the instruments that had multiple takes, and then the percussion was bounced to tracks 1-1 and 2-1.

In the second stage, lead vocals were recorded on track 3 using many virtual tracks, and then comp'd or edited together on 3-7. Another vocal was then recorded on 6-6 and a final comp was made on 3-2.

A similar process was used for both the solo guitar comp'd to track 5-8 and rhythm guitars comp'd to track 4-7.

Background vocals were recorded and then bounced to 7-3 and 8-3.

Finally, using Input>Mix and Track>Mix Modes, all of the bounces and comps were mixed along with the MIDI tracks via digital output to DAT.

**Maggie, we can't wait to see this song in the Top 10 soon. Best of luck!**

**In each issue of *Track Notes*, we are going to profile a VS-880 owner, showing how they are using it for music production. If you have used the VS-880 in an interesting way, please send a copy of your VS-880 track sheet, a bio and a brief description of how you are using the VS-880 to Track Notes c/o Roland Corporation U.S., 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040.**

# Tech & Feature TIPS

## AUTOMATION

One of the great features of the new "V-Xpanded" VS-880-S1 software upgrade is the Snapshot and Dynamic Mix Automation. Here are a couple of thoughts and tips on this great new feature.

### USE THE SCENE BUTTON

Most of the automation process is controlled by the SCENE button. Here's a function list:

| | |
|---|---|
| **SCENE + SELECT** | (Mixer Mode) Turns automation on or off. Notice the Mixer Mode light blinks when automation is turned on. |
| **SCENE + TAP** | Stores a snapshot |
| **SCENE + REC** | Record readies for Dynamic Automation |
| **SCENE + NEXT** | Creates a fade from the snapshot you started to the next snapshot |
| **SCENE + PREVIOUS** | Creates a fade from the snapshot you started to the previous snapshot |

### SNAPSHOT THE TOP OF THE SONG

If you are going to use some snapshots to automate effects or change levels, be sure to take a snapshot of your mixer settings at the beginning of the song. This will tell the VS-880 what your "default" settings are so that it will re-set your effects to the correct patches when you go back to the top of the song.

### USING SNAPSHOTS TO TURN EFFECTS ON OR OFF

Snapshot automation will record changes to the effects presets at any time. However, these snapshots don't record the mixer routing. So how do you turn an effect on or off? Well, let's suppose that you want to add reverb to a guitar track during the verses but not during the solo. First, route the guitar track Post Fader to Effect1. Select the reverb that you want for the verse, go to the beginning of the verse and create a snapshot by holding SCENE and pressing TAP. Then locate to the first spot where you don't want any reverb on the guitar. Select one of the PEQ effects such as B47, press the right Parameter button twice and dial in OFF for EQ Ach. This turns off all of the EQ settings, letting the original "dry" signal through. Press the right Parameter button two more times and save this EQ as a User Patch. With this patch selected, store a second snapshot, allowing you to now hear the guitar with no effect.

### USING SNAPSHOTS TO EDIT A TRACK

Sometimes it is easier to use a snapshot to create an edit than to use the Track:Erase command. For example, suppose you have recorded a guitar part during the intro and decide that the song might sound better if the guitar didn't enter until the second half of the intro. You can easily store a Snapshot with the guitar fader OFF at the beginning of the song and then with the level up when you want the guitar to come in during the second half of the intro. This is very fast and easy to do, and is also very easy to change if need be. This method can also be used to "mute" tracks to do a trial comp from one track to another.

Another tip: the VS-880 creates a very short fade-in during a fast level change to avoid pops or other noises. If you need a percussive sound to start right on the beat, find the exact beat and then back up about 1/2 frame before entering your snapshot to bring the part in.

### SCRUBBING WHILE USING AUTOMATION

The VS-880 always "looks back" to previous automation before it plays. This ensures that levels will align with previous automation if you locate to a certain section of your song. This could cause a problem, however, if you need to use the Preview or Scrub functions to locate an exact down beat as you would in the previous example if you had a guitar part OFF and then wanted to store a snapshot to bring back it on again. The easy solution for this is to hold SCENE and press SELECT to turn the automation OFF. Find the exact location you are looking for and then turn automation back on again and store your snapshot.

### USING TRACK LEVEL TO CHANGE THE OVERALL LEVEL OF AN AUTOMATED TRACK

Let's say you have done a Dynamic Automation for your music. You have created a very complex mix of your guitar parts including fades in and out and even some level changes during the solo. Everything sounds great. But then, after listening to the mix, you decide that the overall guitar level is just a bit too loud. What can you do?

Well, there's a new feature in the VS-880 called TRACK LEVEL which is perfect for just this situation. Press the CHANNEL EDIT button for the guitar track, hold SHIFT and press CHANNEL EDIT button #8, then press the RIGHT Parameter button until you see the TRACK LEVEL parameter. Use the DIAL to raise or lower the overall level of the track. This TRACK LEVEL command is also good to use when one track was recorded too low.

### MARKERS AND SNAPSHOTS: EDITING YOUR SNAPSHOTS

Snapshots are stored as modified markers. After storing some snapshots, you can easily review them using the NEXT and PREVIOUS buttons in the Marker section. Notice that markers which are snapshots have an asterisk after their number (i.e., 010*). It's very easy to modify any particular snapshot. To do this, first locate the snapshot you want to change. It often helps to call up the FADER/PAN display (hold SHIFT and press Play/Display until you see this screen). Then, hold CLEAR and press TAP. This will clear out the old snapshot. Change any of the parameters that need changing, but be sure not to touch any faders that you don't want changed. When you are done, hold SCENE and press TAP to store the new settings.

### ERASING AUTOMATION DATA

There are a couple of different ways to erase your automation data. If you want to erase it all and start over, just hold SHIFT, CLEAR and TAP. Then press YES. This will clear all of your markers and the automation data associated with them. Of course this will also clear out any location markers that you might have entered. The locators will not be affected.

Another, more exact, method is accessed via the SYSTEM: Scene/AutoMix menu. Press SYSTEM until you see Scene/AutoMix. Press YES and then use the PARAMETER buttons to go through the various choices. The SNAP section allows you to choose whether snapshots should include fader levels or not. If you are using snapshots primarily for effects automation, then you might want to turn this to MASKF. The great thing about this method is that you can turn this function on and off and it only affects the snapshots you are currently storing, not any others. So if you have had MASKF on while automating your effects, then you can turn the setting back to ALL, store a snapshot with some level changes and then turn it back to MASKF to work only on the effects. By the way, snapshots can be added to Dynamic Automation data at any time.

Another setting in this area, A Mix Erase, allows you to erase a range of automation markers. You can select a range of marker numbers to erase and clear out a section of automation. If you leave the Erase Mode on MARKERS, then all of your automation and also your locational markers will be erased. If you put Erase Mode on EVENTS, then only your automation data will be erased and your locational markers will remain.

## LINKING MULTIPLE UNITS

For those times when you need more tracks for recording or mixing than you have in one VS-880, you can link two, three, four or more VS-880s together for the ultimate fully automated digital super studio. Two VS-880s are much more cost effective than two MDMs, a comparable mixer, effects, cables, etc. And of course you already know about all of the extra stuff you get, like incredible digital effects, automated digital mixing, virtual tracks, instant random access, non-destructive editing, comping, instant copies of the whole song to try new arrangements, etc. Not to mention the fact that it's a totally portable 16-track digital recording system!

To link two VS-880s, all you need is one MIDI cable and 1 RCA cable. The system is very elegant, giving you a digital mix of all 16 tracks, 128 virtual tracks, 28 channels of automated digital mixing, 4 stereo effects processors, etc.

**To find out more about how to link together two or more VS-880s, just call our FaxBack System, 213/685-5141 x 271, document #21026.**

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